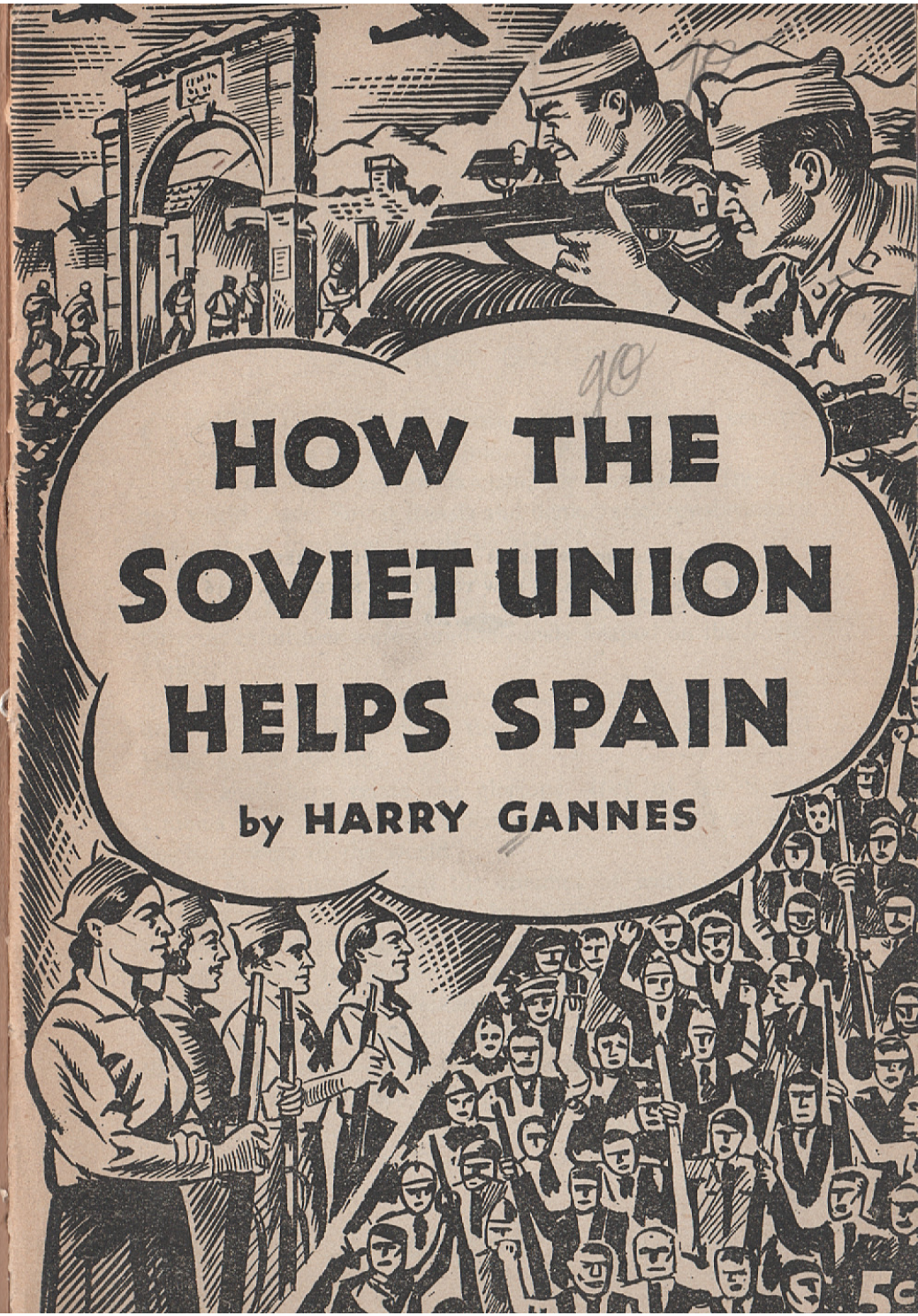


HOW THE SOVIET UNION HELPS SPAIN

by HARRY GANNES

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HOW THE SOVIET UNION HELPS SPAIN

By HARRY GANNES

GEOGRAPHICALLY Spain is the farthest country away from the Soviet Union in Europe.

Yet in the battle against fascism, for democracy, freedom and world peace, Soviet Russia and democratic, revolutionary Spain stand inseparably side by side.

When savage civil war was unleashed within Spain to overthrow the lawfully elected democratic government, the bitterest calumnies were simultaneously heaped on the Soviet Union.

Because it is the most vigorous champion of Spanish freedom, the U.S.S.R. became the chief object of attack of Hitler and Mussolini.

We shall here relate the glorious story of the Soviet Union's steps to aid Spanish democracy against the combined fascist powers of the world.

Not for a moment did the enemies of world labor, of democracy and world peace, let up in their war-inciting diplomatic and propagandistic barrage against Spain's most stalwart friend, the Soviet Union. But standing alone among nations as the valiant defender of Spain against its powerful fascist assailants within and without, the U.S.S.R. was not the exclusive target of the fascist powers alone.

There were those, too, calling themselves friends of Spain and even "revolutionists" who berated the Soviet Union, though with constantly diminishing force.

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Some failed to see the dangerous situation that the fascist powers had created deliberately, the vacillations of Britain and France, the almost disastrous trailing and procrastination of the Labor and Socialist International, the Labor Party officialdom, and of Premier Leon Blum of France. Some fantastically believed that the Soviet Union could magically change all political, geographical and military factors in Europe and transfer the great defensive might it had built up within its own borders to Spain for use against the combined fascist dictators, and against other powers countenancing and encouraging them.

When the fascist dictators and their apologists like William Randolph Hearst charge that the Soviet Union "instigated" the bloody events in Spain, they should keep in mind two fundamental facts.

First: Why should the U.S.S.R. pick the country farthest away from it in Europe, the one least accessible to its military aid, for what the fascists call its "nefarious plot"?

And second: Can the fascists and their advocates explain why "Moscow" should desire civil war in a country where the anti-fascist People's Front had been most victorious; a land where a bloody uprising could only inspire perverted hopes in the murderous breasts of the Spanish fascists, and inflame the feverish minds of the fascist warmongers elsewhere?

The foreign enemies of Spain are, primarily, the foes of the Soviet Union. From the very start, the civil war in Spain was not a "national" event. In its embryo, conspirative stage it was anti-Soviet also. Knowing well that they could not defeat or enslave the majority of the Spanish people, who in the February 16, 1936, elections had thrown out the Lerroux-Robles-Sotelo fascist-monarchist-feudal landlord ruling cliques, the Spanish militarists and fascist reactionaries first of all looked for foreign aid to overthrow the constitutionally

elected government. From the initial moment of their plotting, the civil war in Spain became an international event. It can be settled only as an international issue.

The real plotters for the overthrow of Spanish democracy were the dictators Hitler, Mussolini and Salazar. For Hitler especially, the preparations of civil war in Spain were part of his war plans against France, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union. For Mussolini, it was an important step to wrest domination of the Mediterranean from England.

We do not propose here to go into the generally acknowledged facts of foreign fascist complicity in the preparatory plotting to overthrow the legitimate government of Spain, nor to delve very far now into the fact widely attested to in the capitalist press: that General Franco, and his *junta* of fascists, monarchist and landlord-capitalist supporters had promised both Hitler and Mussolini substantial colonial concessions and war bases in various Spanish possessions, in Mediterranean and Atlantic islands, and on the Iberian mainland itself.

Only one undeniable point need be stressed at this moment. The objective of the fascist powers in Spain was to strengthen the preparations for war against France, for the seizure of African and other colonies, for the destruction of the Soviet Union and the extension of fascism to democratic countries.

From the very first, therefore, the Soviet Union utilized every ounce of its energy, of its power, of the possibilities of world action, of the great part it plays in arousing and leading world labor and all forces of socialism and progress, to help Spain defeat fascism and the incendiaries of a new world war.

The guiding principle of the U.S.S.R. in defense of revolutionary Spain and its lawful democratic government was expressed in the burning words of Joseph Stalin to the Cen-

tral Committee of the Communist Party of Spain when the most fateful battle for Madrid was raging.

On October 16, Comrade Stalin wired to José Diaz, Secretary of the Spanish Communist Party:

"The toilers of the Soviet Union only do their duty when they give all the aid within their power to the revolutionary masses of Spain.

"They realize that the liberation of Spain from the oppression of the fascist reactionaries is not a private affair of Spaniards.

"It is the common cause of all advanced and progressive mankind."

Arms and Fascism

The first shots in the Spanish civil war were fired by the fascists with guns supplied beforehand by Hitler and Mussolini. A drastic setback and initial defeat were delivered to the conspirators who wanted to assassinate Spanish democracy. In Barcelona, Madrid, and in the Guadarrama mountains, the first powerful attacks of the skilled fascist militarists, armed with German and Italian instruments of death, were driven back.

An alarmed cry for help went up from the Spanish rebels to their German and Italian backers. They must have more arms. The people were putting up a resistance never dreamed of. The fighting was to be more ferocious, longer drawn out than originally planned. The people did not cower before their ancient masters.

Then took place a terrible move against Spanish democracy by the Tory government of England assisted by the accommodating policy of the Socialist Premier of France, Blum.

While the fascist powers rushed all manner of arms and munitions to the Spanish rebels, held at bay and in danger of being annihilated, the British government, seconded by the Socialist Leon Blum, effectively held off arms shipments to the people of Spain.

During July and August, Premier Leon Blum striving, as

he thought, to avert a world war, actually achieved the creation of a blockade against the legitimate Spanish government, depriving it of a right never denied by international law, namely, the right to purchase arms to defend itself against an insurrection. Up to that time, of course, that right had always been exercised by a reactionary government to defend itself against a revolutionary uprising of the people. But the moment the people, as the lawful government of Spain, sought to purchase arms to defend itself against a fascist uprising, it was the Socialist Minister, Leon Blum, who took the initial steps to create what was later to be known as the "non-intervention" farce.

During this time, also, the fascists who knew of the date set for the uprising by their co-conspirators in Spain accused the Soviet Union of shipping arms to the lawful government of Spain, though admittedly the fascists had the jump and the geographical-military advantage.

On August 1, the British and French governments had agreed to work together to set up what was later known as the International Committee for Application of the Non-Intervention Agreement in Spain.

Britain urged the inclusion of Germany, Portugal, Russia, besides Italy.

Blum readily accepted. There then began a game of procrastination, for which the Italian and especially the German fascists are notorious.

France finally set August 17 as the deadline for adherence to the neutrality pact. The two fascist powers overlooked the deadline, but Blum still did not allow shipment of arms to the constitutional government of Spain. He continued to discuss with Rome and Berlin until August 24, when Hitler announced an "embargo" in Germany on arms shipments to Spain.

Meanwhile, the fascist powers, as conditions of their

entry into the non-intervention agreement, demanded the adherence of the Soviet Union.

The U.S.S.R. and "Non-Intervention"

The Soviet Union emphatically was not in favor of a non-intervention agreement. With sufficient support from the Socialist Parties, the labor and anti-fascist movements throughout the world, besides the support of the Communist Parties, the Soviet Union would have been able to stop the non-intervention move in its tracks. Maxim Litvinov, Soviet Foreign Commissar, in his address to the League Assembly on September 28, quite definitely expressed the Soviet Union's views against "neutrality" and "non-intervention" as aids to the fascist aggressors.

The initial action of Blum under the prompting of London not only set a dangerous precedent, but created complicated and intricate relations, whereby the Soviet Union was put in a difficult and dangerous situation.

To have stood out alone against the non-intervention pact under the conditions created by the French cabinet, headed by the Socialist Blum, and the British Tory government, led by the Conservative Stanley Baldwin, would at that moment have been just what the fascists wished. The Soviet Union made its position clear.

It did not consider the non-intervention scheme as just or helpful to Spain, but deemed that if it could be made effective by stopping arms shipments from Germany and Italy to the Spanish rebels, the people of Spain could settle with their assailants.

The Soviet Union could not come to an open clash with Blum on the non-intervention pact, because that would have played into the hands of Hitler and the pro-Nazi faction in the London Tory cabinet which was trying to provoke just such a state of affairs.

What the Soviet Union could then do in the way of shipping arms to Spain, under the difficult condition created, depended on the degree of support that could be aroused from the British Labor Party, the British Trade Union Congress, the Socialist Party of France, the Socialist International, in fact, from every anti-fascist force working in unity with the Communists. Acting alone, with the British labor movement and the Socialist International pledged to support the non-intervention agreement, the Soviet Union would not be in any position to have overcome the fascists in an open race to ship arms to Spain.

It was clear that neither Britain nor France would have taken part in supplying arms to the legitimate, democratic government of Spain.

Such an outcome would have resolved itself into a free-for-all between the Soviet Union on the one hand, and Italy, Germany and Portugal on the other.

Both Germany and Italy are not only more favorably situated for supplying arms shipments to Spain, but the Soviet Union's only two routes to Spain are controlled by Germany in the North and Italy in the South. Besides, the German and Italian navies, built for imperialist conquest, give these two fascist powers far and away superiority in any free-for-all in arms shipments as between the Soviet Union alone and the combined fascist powers.

When the Socialist Premier, Leon Blum, promulgated the non-intervention agreement, he cut Spain off from its natural and quickest, as well as its most ample, source of arms and supplies with which to defend itself.

Britain's Policy in Spain

Most interested among the imperialist powers in the future of Spain is Great Britain. When the fascist dictators schemed

to install fascism in the Iberian peninsula, Britain was confronted with a series of contradictory questions:

Was her control of the Mediterranean further threatened?

What would be the effect of a People's Front victory in Spain on Britain's balance-of-power manipulations in Europe and the Tory cabinet's encouragement of Hitler's rearmament?

If Mussolini gained a grip in Spain and Portugal, what would happen to London's age-old domination in those quarters?

Should the anti-fascists win against the Spanish rebels and their German and Italian backers, what would its effects be against the machinations of the Tories for a reactionary European front on their own model?

Would it not be certain that a victory against fascism in Spain would not only strengthen the forces of democracy but would increase the influence of the Soviet Union for peace and advance to socialism?

Primarily it was British imperialism that decided to throw its weight on the side of reaction in Spain and to block the Soviet Union's efforts to help to preserve Spanish democracy.

Concerned over Britain's position in the western Mediterranean, the perspectives of a future strengthening of its old alliance with the ancient ruling clique of Spain, the Baldwin cabinet gauged its international action to retain the good will of the perspective fascist dictators of Spain. At the same time, the London Tories acted to prevent a victory by the People's Front in control of the lawful government of Spain over the fascists.

A glance over the dominant points of British imperialist policy, formulated by the dominant pro-fascist section of the Baldwin cabinet, will explain why the British Tories prevailed—successfully—upon Leon Blum, Socialist Premier of

France, to broach the question of "neutrality" as a bribe to the fascists.

The British Tories showed they were ready to sacrifice the peace and democracy of Europe and to endanger even their own national interests because of their reactionary and pro-fascist position which led them covertly to assist General Franco.

An examination of events since the outbreak of the civil war in Spain emphasizes that the guiding spirit of the British cabinet's dominant policy towards Spain is primarily predicated on the following aims:

1. The Tories insist that the People's Front government of Spain be defeated at all costs. Though they do not favor a dictatorship resting exclusively on German and Italian bayonets, they consider that a lesser evil.

2. Sufficient has appeared in the newspapers of England, France and the United States to make positive the assertion that Britain has come to its own agreement with General Franco. Just what it provides can only be guessed.

3. Whatever concessions the Spanish fascists have made to Rome and Berlin, the London Tories feel certain they will make them greater concessions.

4. The extension of the struggle—even if the Spanish fascists are finally successful—the London cabinet believes would leave Spain so economically prostrate that it would have to come to London for credits to bolster its dictatorship. The two fascist powers of Germany and Italy could not supply the money Franco would need. In return for credits the British rulers feel sure they can cancel concessions already made injurious to their interests.

5. Above all, the Tories know that a victory for the People's Front government in Spain would not only be an impetus to the anti-fascist people's front everywhere, but would so greatly strengthen the forces of peace and socialism

that it would very quickly undermine Hitler and Mussolini at home and spoil the Tory game of relying on Hitler as a "stabilizer" on the Continent.

Swift action by the Labor Party and Trade Union Congress could, however, throw a large and damaging monkey wrench into the Tory's pro-fascist machinery.

Blum, acting under the belief that he was preventing the German and Italian dictators from sending arms to the Spanish insurgents, succeeded only in unprecedentedly robbing the legal government of its well-established right to purchase arms for its defense—the defense of world democracy, of the peace of France and the peace of the world.

On the pretext of placating the Rightist group within the Radical Socialist Party (a section of the People's Front of France), who argued that "isolation" of the Spanish civil war was the best means of preserving peace, Blum fell into the trap set for him by the British imperialists.

London found it convenient to have Blum inaugurate the non-aggression agreement for many good reasons, the most important of which are the following:

France was the country best situated to supply the necessary arms and munitions to the constitutional government of Spain. If she initiated non-intervention she tied chiefly herself.

Leon Blum, as a Socialist leader and Premier of a government supported by the People's Front, could influence the leadership of the British Labor Party and Trade Union Congress, as well as of the Labor and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions to support the official policy of British imperialism.

By this means, the British could conceal their maneuvers to assist the Spanish fascists, to continue their secret negotiations with Hitler, Mussolini, Salazar and General Franco.

Because of the Franco-Soviet mutual assistance pact, so

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powerful a peace factor, Blum could therefore exert pressure to bring the U.S.S.R. into the non-intervention agreement.

Spain Turns to the Soviet Union

Thus, while Hitler's and Mussolini's freighters and warships were churning the Mediterranean and the Bay of Biscay, loaded to the gunwales with arms for Spanish fascism, Blum devoted himself entirely to perfecting his non-intervention agreement.

The strongest arguments he could make for France were well paraphrased by Gabriel Péri, the Communist commentator on foreign affairs in the French Communist Party organ, *l'Humanite*. On October 9, Péri wrote:

"France said: My purpose is to prevent the shipment of supplies to the rebels. In order to achieve this result, it is true, no doubt, that I am placing the Republic and the conspirators on the same footing. But, on the other hand, I am hindering the aid these latter are counting upon from international fascism. The quicker the powers friendly to the [Spanish] Republic and to peace will adhere to my initiative, the surer will be the result. Still, it is necessary that no peaceful power should by its abstention furnish a pretext to Germany and Italy to stay out of it.

"Then we can imagine to what reproaches the U.S.S.R. would have been exposed if it had refused to join the pact."

Harry Pollitt, Secretary of the Communist Party of Britain, carried this last point a bit further when he declared:

"Blum had forced the Soviet government into a neutrality policy by the utilization of pressure regarding the future of the Franco-Soviet pact."

Once given the interaction of the fascist aims, the encouragement of British imperialism, the accommodation of the misguided policy of the Socialist Premier of France, Leon Blum, the question facing the Soviet Union as to whether to

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refrain from entering the non-intervention agreement was an extremely grave one.

The Soviet government, Comrade Pollitt pointed out, was moving in an extremely complicated diplomatic situation where one false step would lead to an open diplomatic rupture, followed by military action by the fascist and other reactionary powers.

The Soviet Union knew too that at that moment the Tory cabinet was encouraging Hitler, and that it would have made full use of any Soviet refusal to participate in the non-intervention agreement. So anxious were the Nazis to have the Tory cabinet's policy prevail that *The New York Times* Berlin correspondent, Guido Enderis, cabled from Germany on September 2:

"Germany favors delegating the task of enforcing non-intervention to a single power and she recommends that the direction be assigned to Britain."

Rather than allow collusion between the Nazis and the Tory ministers to confront Spain, the Soviet Union strove to do all it could within the non-intervention committee to stop fascist arms from being shipped to Spain, to arouse international anti-fascist action against the fascists and to destroy the sham of "neutrality" and "non-intervention" at the first favorable moment.

No sooner were the signatures of the 27 powers on the non-intervention agreement than German and Italian fascism resorted to new schemes of arms shipments to the fascists.

While General Mola, Spanish fascist commander of the Northern forces, quickly cut the Western French railroad approach to Spain at Irun, the Portuguese dictator Salazar opened all the ports of Portugal for arms shipments to General Franco.

Indeed, the whole strategy of the Spanish fascist generals

after their initial setback in the Guadarramas and Barcelona was to cut their way to Badajoz, on the Spanish-Portuguese border, on the Tagus River. Then with the supplies delivered to them from Germany and Italy, through Portugal, to smash on towards Madrid.

The Communist Parties in all countries immediately raised the alarm.

Pravda, central organ of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, spoke out:

"The working people of the world cannot remain indifferent and keep silent when the fate of the Spanish people is being decided and when the mercenaries of Franco are trying to annihilate the free people of Spain with bayonet, bullet, bomb and hunger.

"The brave Spanish people turn their eyes toward the Soviet Union. In our struggle for socialism the Spanish people find their strength, inspiration and energy."

For the first time in their history—during this bitter civil war with reaction trying to overthrow the legitimate government—Spain and the Soviet Union exchanged ambassadors. In both countries the envoys were greeted with joy and enthusiasm, with firm pledges of the closest ties and unbreakable cooperation.

In France, taking up the fight against the "neutrality" and non-intervention scheme in an effort to arouse sufficient mass activity to change Blum's disastrous course, Maurice Thorez, Secretary of the Communist Party of France, addressed an open letter to Paul Faure, Socialist leader. In the name of the Communists of France, Thorez urged that Socialist and Communist Parties unite to demand that the arms embargo against Spain be lifted.

"Arms for Spain!"

While the Soviet Union was preparing for the first opportunity either to force complete adherence to a complete stop-

page of arms shipments to Spain under the non-intervention agreement or to restore to the legitimate government of Spain its right to purchase arms, the Communists throughout the world led the fight on the neutrality scandal.

Outstanding was the huge demonstration of 100,000 on September 4 in France against non-intervention under the leadership of the Communist Party. On September 7, the strike of the Metal Workers Union brought 225,000 French workers into the streets with the demand that resounded throughout France: "Arms for Spain! Airplanes for Spain! Down with the embargo on Spain! Aid our brothers in Spain!"

Instead of budging from the policy of non-intervention under pressure of the overwhelming majority of the French masses, Blum angrily defended his position. Blum's adamant adherence to the false policy of non-intervention emboldened the reactionary leaders of the British Labor Party in its similar course. It gave an excuse to the Labor and Socialist International to refrain for the moment from action against the Tory policy or independent of it.

In fact, the leading Socialist spokesmen in the earliest stages of the non-intervention agreement became its most fervent defenders. By their strong advocacy of the schemes originally set afoot by the London Tory cabinet they made it harder for the Spanish government to plead its cause in international official bodies and among labor and anti-fascists in all countries.

For example, while the Communist Party of France was demanding an end to the farcical neutrality policy, while the fascists were rushing arms to the Spanish rebels, we find a typical expression of the views of the Socialist officialdom in England as well as the Right wing in France and the United States contained in an editorial of the Jewish (Socialist) Daily *Forward* published in New York.

The dangerous falsity of the non-intervention agreement, the self-destructive illusions it fostered, were seldom so unwittingly and effectively uncovered as in the following editorial from the *Forward,* September 8:

> "Now when all government have pledged not to provide arms to either of the contending sides, and not one of these governments has yet broken the pact, the Spanish government is in a position to handle the fascists by itself. . . .
>
> "Through his wise statesmanship and truly socialist attitude toward the Spanish civil war, Leon Blum has not only saved Europe from a new war, but has also made it impossible for Hitler and Mussolini to help the fascist murderers drown the Spanish republic and the Spanish labor movement in blood."

The same editorial went on to berate the French and other Communists for demanding an end to non-intervention, charging that this demand "smacks of provocation".

Were this exclusively the stand of the *Forward* it would not be as harmful as it actually proved. But support to Blum's stand (cunningly initiated by the British Tories) was similarly given by the British Labor Party leadership right up until the Edinburgh Congress early in October, nearly a month afterwards. It was endorsed by the British Trade Union Congress officialdom, by the Labor and Socialist International and its adherents among the officialdom in all countries.

And it was not until the Soviet Union threw a bombshell into the non-intervention committee that this position was blasted.

Premier Blum himself in the middle of September at a mass meeting of the Socialist Party gratuitously declared there is not one shred of proof that Italy and Germany have delivered weapons to Spain after the conclusion of the neutrality agreement.

Faced with such an attitude from the Socialist Premier of France, Leon Blum, who was cooperating with the British Foreign Minister, before the Spanish government had presented the evidence it had gathered to the League of Nations, the Soviet Union could not then undertake to act with any telling effect against the non-intervention crime.

Yet all the while foreign fascist aid was going to General Franco.

Spain Protests

On September 15, the Spanish government directed a note to the League of Nations containing impressive and voluminous evidence of arms shipments to the Spanish fascists from Germany and Italy, through Portugal, the Balearic Islands, and directing to Northern and Southern Spanish ports. But this note was not published until September 30, after insistence by the Soviet Union and Spain.

Early in September, General Queipo de Llano, the fascist leader in Seville, announced over the radio that he had sent an official delegation to Lisbon to convey his personal congratulations to Dictator Salazar, and to thank the Portuguese government for the help given to "the only government which can and must rule Spain".

The world's cables hummed with the scandalous news of incessant and cynically increasing arms shipments from Italy and Germany to the Spanish fascists.

A sample is the following headline over a cable to *The New York Times* (September 14) from Lisbon, capital of Portugal:

"Lisbon Pushes Aid to Spanish Rebels. Officials here permit Portugal to continue as a corridor through which supplies may be freely shipped to the Spanish rebels."

Another instance from *The New York Times:*

"Rebels Use Lisbon as Supply Funnel and Buying Center. Insurgent embassy there openly purchases gasoline, trucks and foodstuffs."

During September an unofficial Committee of Inquiry into Breaches of International Law Relating to Non-Intervention in Spain sat in London piling up evidence of Italian and German arms shipments to the fascists.

On the committee were Eleanor F. Rathbone, independent member of Parliament for the English universities; J. B. Trend, professor of Spanish in Cambridge University; Lord Faringdon; John Jagger, of the International Union of Distributive and Allied Workers, a Labor Member of Parliament; R. McKinnon Wood; E. L. Mollalieu and two secretaries of the committee—John Langdon-Davies, who was *News Chronicle* correspondent in Spain, and Geoffrey Bing.

The evidence gathered by this committee would fill a fat volume.

Salient in the conclusions drawn by this eminent committee. whose proceedings were attended and observed by secret agents of the British Foreign Office, are these sentences:

"We have now heard further evidence and examined a number of other statements which confirm our former findings that assistance in the form of munitions and expert personnel, together with other forms of collaboration, has been furnished to the rebels by Italy and Portugal since the date of the non-intervention pact. . . .

"We have received, moreover, a large amount of evidence showing German assistance both before and after August 3, 1936, the date upon which the German government informed the French government that no war material had been sent or would be sent to the Spanish rebels."

Note well, especially, the concluding statement of this committee:

"An additional circumstance which raises a grave issue is that the British government has, according to our information, been made aware

by persons in its employ, of the breaches of the non-intervention agreement."

The Tory cabinet knew all along from its numerous secret agents in Portugal and from its consular and diplomatic representatives in Seville, Cadiz, Coruna, and other fascist centers in Spain that the rebels were constantly receiving all the arms they needed from Italy and Germany in open contravention of the non-intervention agreement.

For more than 200 years, Portugal's foreign policy had been determined in London. Under the Salazar dictatorship, Portugal had become, more than ever, a virtual puppet of the British empire. No serious political move could possibly be taken in Portugal without the connivance of the British business interests and diplomatic agents in Lisbon, nor without the approval of the Baldwin cabinet.

Soviet Masses Act

Meanwhile, the Soviet toilers were giving "all the aid within their power to the revolutionary masses of Spain".

Never since the October Revolution were the masses of Russia so thoroughly aroused, so aware of the danger to the Spanish people and to world peace.

Hitler and Mussolini, as well as Great Britain, have accussed the U.S.S.R. of shipping arms secretly to Spain. Yet not in a single instance has this been proved. True, the Soviet masses held monster mass meetings in behalf of Spain. They collected huge sums. They did everything in their power to help Spain defeat fascism. By October 2, the toilers in the Soviet Union had collected $10,000,000 for Spain. The women of the U.S.S.R. had sent $2,000,000 in food and clothing for the Spanish women and children. A number of boatloads of food had been openly sent.

Heroically the Spanish people, deprived of arms, held the

fascists back at best they could. General Franco, warned that the Soviet Union was preparing a tremendous assault on the non-intervention pact to stop arms shipments to the fascists, gave orders for a desperate push. By this time, supplied with several scores of Italian tanks, with more than 100 Italian and German bombing and pursuit planes and more arms and ammunition than his band of German, Italian and Moorish troops could use, he encircled Madrid.

Promised that the non-intervention farce would be completely ended in his favor by the recognition of the Spanish fascist dictatorship by Germany and Italy immediately upon his entry into Madrid, General Franco pushed ahead more furiously.

It was then that the Spanish government took the initial step which created favorable conditions for the Soviet Union's subsequent action.

Fully apprised by his German and Italian and British agents of the impending move of the Soviet Union and the Spanish government, General Franco gave the order to take Madrid at all costs and at the greatest speed.

The Spanish government had sent its note containing ample evidence of foreign fascist aid to the Spanish rebels to the League of Nations on September 15. But it was not until the latter part of September that Alvarez del Vayo, Madrid Minister of Foreign Affairs, was able with the help of the Soviet Union to force publication and consideration of the evidence.

And this was a necessary preliminary step to the Soviet Union's exploding the whole issue before the non-intervention committee in London.

To be sure, General Franco realized that the Soviet Union's action threatened a grave situation for his fascist *junta*. And he lost no time marching on to Madrid.

It is sometimes asked why the Soviet Union "waited" until

General Franco was threatening the very gates of the capital before it shook the world by a note such as that of October 7, exposing foreign fascist aid to the Spanish reactionary insurgents.

The Soviet Union never lost a single moment, a single opportunity, a single possibility of giving the maximum aid to the Spanish people. It was precisely because he was aware of this fact that General Franco and his fascist backers pushed their drive to the breaking point.

Having in mind the major factors of the Soviet Union's relation to Spain already related, an examination of dates and events after the Spanish government itself had proceeded will show the speed and timeliness and maximum effectiveness of the Soviet Union's actions.

The first hearing that Spain could get before the League of Nations on the criminal foreign fascist aid to the Spanish rebels was towards the end of September.

For the Soviet Union to have initiated such diplomatic action would have placed it in a position of acting in place of and usurping the initiative of the lawful government of Spain. When the Spanish government did move, the Soviet Union acted swiftly with tremendous results not only in diplomatic circles but, more important still, in the world labor and anti-fascist movement.

On September 25, Spanish Foreign Minister del Vayo, in a withering indictment of those powers who assisted the Spanish fascists, was the first to demand the end of the non-intervention farce.

In burning words, del Vayo declared:

"Every Spanish defender of the Republic and of freedom who falls at the front, under the fire from these weapons imported in the most cynical manner and daily increasing, in defiance of the pact of non-intervention, brings irrefutable proof of the crime which is being committed against the Spanish people."

That was the first diplomatic shot that was to ring around the world labor movement.

Then, on September 28, Maxim Litvinov, Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs, took up the fight, a fight which the British imperialists tried to bury, but which they were unable to quash, a fight which had the most instantaneous results in the international labor movement and anti-fascist circles.

"The Soviet government considers the principle of neutrality inapplicable to a war levied by rebels against their lawful government," insisted Litvinov, "and on the contrary, considers it to be a breach of the principles of international law".

Fascist Aid Exposed

The first sensational news that the public had of the Soviet Union's demand before the non-intervention committee in London was on October 7.

"As a matter of fact," wrote Ferdinand Kuhn, Jr., *The New York Times* correspondent in London, on October 8, "two Russian notes, not one, have been laid before the committee. The first one, which preceded yesterday's bombshell by a whole week, was submitted in writing last Wednesday by Samuel Kagan, Soviet Charge d'Affaires in London."

In the first note, the Soviet Union demanded two things: (1) That an impartial committee be sent to the Spanish-Portuguese border to investigate the question of arms shipments. (2) That some members of this committee remain to control the fulfillment of the non-intervention agreement in the future.

The British government was amply informed of the fascist powers' violations of the non-intervention agreement, especially of its Portuguese puppet's cynical flaunting of the agreement. Mr. Kuhn tells us: "The note was circulated to members of the non-intervention committee including the

British, who were genuinely worried by evidence of Italian and German bad faith and saw advantages in sending a non-partisan group to investigate on the spot."

But what the British actually did was to attempt to kill the Soviet Union's efforts.

It was then that the Soviet Union issued its more drastic note of October 7, which was not "circulated to members of the non-intervention committee" but published to the masses of the world from Moscow.

That note, which forced a stormy hearing of the non-intervention committee, was handed to the British Foreign Office and to Lord Plymouth, the British chairman of the non-intervention committee by Samuel Kagan, acting on behalf of the Soviet Ambassador Ivan Maisky.

The situation under which the U.S.S.R. took this drastic step was an extremely difficult one. For example:

The British Trade Union Congress had just previously voted to continue support of the non-intervention agreement initiated through Blum by the British Tory government.

Then in session was the British Labor Party Conference at Edinburgh, listening to a delegation from Spain pleading to end the non-intervention farce. Despite the note of the Soviet Union, the British Labor Party Conference, against the wishes of the majority of delegates, but on the bloc or card vote procedure which is usual in the Labor Party conferences, voted by 1,836,000 to 519,000 to continue adherence to the non-intervention position.

The Socialist Premier of France Blum stood immovably behind the non-intervention scandal.

The Labor and Socialist International, as well as the International Federation of Trade Unions, at that time, continued to support non-intervention.

Single handed, against the 26 other nations in the non-intervention pact, led by British imperialism, behind whose

skirts hid Italian and German fascism, the Soviet Union acted nevertheless. It presented its note.

In the name of the 170,000,000 people of the U.S.S.R., the Soviet note took up the battle begun by the Spanish government. The Soviet document read as follows:

"In notes addressed September 15 to the governments of Portugal, Italy and Germany, the Spanish government protested against assistance and military munitions sent by those countries to Spanish rebels.

"The Spanish government has forwarded those notes also to other participants in the non-intervention agreement with the request that they adopt measures to halt the situation under which the legal Spanish government has been reduced to actual blockade while rebels, without any obstacles, are supplied with airplanes and other kinds of munitions from different sources.

"In his declaration to the League of Nations, Julio Alvarez del Vayo [Spanish Foreign Minister] raised the same question before all the members. A long enumeration of the facts, representing violation of the agreement and referring to the latest period, was cited by the Spanish government in its 'White Paper' as well as in additional material published by the Spanish government October 3.

"It is sufficient to recount the following facts:

"On September 10 twenty-three freight cars with boxes containing unassembled parts for fourteen airplanes from Hamburg came from Portugal to Seville.

"On September 20, twelve big German planes landed at Tetuan. Later these airplanes were used to transport troops of the so-called Foreign Legion from Tetuan to Spain.

"On September 29, the Spanish government received a report that on September 27 a load of poison gas and military munitions was sent over the Spanish border from Lisbon.

"A number of eyewitnesses questioned by the committee in London, under the chairmanship of Miss Eleanor Florence Rathbone (M. P.), also many newspaper correspondents who have published personal observations, confirm that the supply of arms to the rebels via Portugal is continuing to a large extent.

"The rebels possess tanks and bombers of German and Italian origin

which were not in the possession of the Spanish army at the beginning of the revolution.

"Among airplanes shot down by militia forces were nine airplanes of German origin bearing the manufacturing stamp 'Henkel'. The rebel troops are transported via Gibralter from Morocco to Spain on German and Italian planes.

"The frontier region of Portugal, from the very beginning of the rebellion, appeared to be the main base of the insurgents.

"In Portugal, the rebels are forming their detachments and they receive military detachments from there. Since the formation of your committee, the Soviet government itself put forward the question of an investigation of Portugal's action in openly violating the agreement, and taking steps towards halting such action.

"The Soviet government fears the situation as created by repeated violation of the London non-intervention pact makes the agreement non-operative.

"The Soviet government cannot consent to the conversion of the non-intervention pact into a screen for concealing military assistance to the rebels against the legal government by some participants in the agreement.

"The Soviet government is compelled, in this connection, to declare that if violation is not halted immediately it will consider itself free from any obligation resulting from the agreement."

World Labor Stirred

The Soviet Union's action had an electric effect on the international labor and anti-fascist movement.

Though with the help of Lord Plymouth, the fascist powers bitterly assailed the Soviet's exposures of their criminal help to the Spanish rebels, the Soviet Union's note marked a turning point in the policy of the British Labor Party, the Labor and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions.

The first reaction to the Soviet note was the decision of the Socialist Party Congress in Belgium to demand the end-

ing of neutrality, and the right of the Spanish government to purchase arms.

It has powerfully affected the British Labor movement, and there is a tremendous feeling that labor must embark on a campaign to force the National government to stand by the U.S.S.R.

But nothing could stir the Socialist Premier Leon Blum. Fearing that the action of the U.S.S.R. would upset its carefully laid scheme, the British Cabinet rushed Sir Anthony Eden, Foreign Minister, to collar Blum in Paris and get him to toe the line. Herbert L. Matthews, in a cable from Paris to *The New York Times,* published October 9, tells the story:

"Despite a Russian threat to abandon the Spanish neutrality commission in London, France will not waver in her policy of non-intervention in Spain. Anthony Eden, British Foreign Secretary, was so informed today by Premier Leon Blum in a long conversation."

Not only did Blum pledge his continued adherence to the non-intervention fake, but he evidently promised to overcome the growing opposition to his stand already rising in the world labor movement.

Mr. Matthews went on to report: "It is known that the Quai d'Orsay [French Foreign Office] has been in touch with Maxim Litvinov, Soviet Foreign Commissar, counseling moderation. . . . Twice before he [Blum] has defeated the Communists when it came to a show-down on the Spanish question, and there is no reason to believe he cannot do it again if they cause him any trouble."

Lord Plymouth, British chairman of the non-intervention committee, who acted like the paid counsellor of the fascist members of the committee, called a meeting of the delegates on October 9.

Violently provocative speeches were made by the representatives of fascist Italy and Germany. To the charges of the

Soviet Union, borne out by evidence in the hands of the British government and made publicly by British witnesses and journalists, the fascists answered with unsupported counter-charges.

It was clear that the action of Portugal in walking out of the session and the riotous tactics of the Italian and German spokesmen were deliberate filibustering to confuse the public and to prevent the non-intervention committee from even appearing to function.

On November 12, the Soviet Union, in a very brief note, demanded action that particularly riled the British. Soviet Ambassador Maisky handed the following blunt demand to Lord Plymouth:

"In connection with the question proposed in my statement handed to you on Oct. 7, and which was discussed at the last meeting of the committee, I have the honor, on behalf of my government, to present for the urgent consideration of the committee, the following two points:

"The principal supply of arms to the rebels goes through Portugal and Portuguese ports. The least and most urgent measures necessary to put an end to these supplies of arms and violations of the non-intervention agreement should be the immediate arrangement of control over Portuguese ports.

"We demand from the committee the establishment of such control.

"We propose that such control should be effected by the British or French fleets, or by both fleets acting together.

"Without such steps, the non-intervention agreement not only does not serve its purpose, but acts as a camouflage for the rebels against the legal Spanish government.

"I have the honor to ask you that the proposals made above be discussed at the next meeting of the committee, which I urgently ask you to convene without delay."

This was too much not only for the noble Lord Plymouth but even for the British Labor Party official organ, the *London Daily Herald.*

The *Herald,* which had mildly applauded the Soviet Union's initial step exposing fascist aid to the Spanish rebels, was taken aback when the Soviet Union swiftly followed up the farcical committee session with a powerful demand for action. *The Herald labeled Maisky's proposal for the control of the Portuguese gateways for the Spanish fascist arms as "clumsy" and "mischievous".*

Instead of recognizing that the Soviet Union could act most effectively in its stirring fight against the non-intervention fake only when backed by the aroused masses of the world, the organ of the British Labor Party leadership sought to dash cold water over the enthusiasm then rising among British workers.

Supported by the broadest masses, the Soviet Union's diplomatic steps in London could be translated into the arms needed by the Spanish people.

Though the *Daily Herald* scoffed when the Soviet Union first began its activities against the non-intervention scheme, the British Labor Party officialdom was destined soon to change its entire policy as a result of the Soviet government's attack on the shameful results of the non-intervention agreement.

Lord Plymouth was even more riled. In his response he stated with obvious irritation:

"Since the reply of the Portuguese government has not yet been received [the original Soviet note on October 7 was "referred" to the fascist violators of the non-intervention agreement], and since, moreover, your note of October 12 contains no additional evidence whatsoever to show that the agreement is in fact being violated, I do not think it would be proper for me to summon a further meeting of the committee to discuss the matter."

Communists' Unity Appeal

Through the Soviet Union's actions and the British gov-

ernment's ill-concealed countenancing of the fascist violation of the feeble neutrality scheme, the workers began to see that it was the fake non-intervention that was leading them to war by its camouflaging of the fascist provocations and aggression against Spain.

The position of the British Labor Party towards non-intervention was by now becoming untenable.

When the Secretary of the Labor and Socialist International, Friedrich Adler, was appealed to by Maurice Thorez for a united front of the Socialist and Communist Internationals to smash the barriers set up against arms to the lawful government of Spain, he passed the buck to Louis de Brouckère, chairman of the Labor and Socialist International. De Brouckère had been to Spain in the early days of the civil war. He had addressed a passionate appeal to world labor warning that defense of Spanish democracy was defense of world peace.

But when it came to united action, when it came to supporting the steps taken by the Soviet Union to destroy the diplomatic instruments that were aiding the Spanish rebels, the leaders of the Socialist International were masters of delay.

When the Trotskyite assassins in the Soviet Union were executed for their proved attempts to murder Joseph Stalin and other Soviet leaders and for having murdered Sergei Kirov in December, 1934, the same gentlemen, Friedrich Adler and Louis de Brouckère, seconded by Walter Citrine of the British Trade Union Congress, showed extreme haste to slander the Soviet Union. But when it came to responding to a call for action in behalf of Spain where Communists, Socialists, Syndicalists and Left Republicans were pouring out their blood freely to defend Spanish democracy and world peace against the fascist enemies of the working class

everywhere, the Socialist International spokesmen forgot their former aptitude for haste.

However, on October 14, a conference finally was held in Paris with Marcel Cachin and Maurice Thorez present in behalf of the Communist International, and Friedrich Adler and Louis de Brouckère for the Labor and Socialist International.

Explaining the critical situation confronting Spain, the action of the Soviet Union, the spokesmen for the Communist International made the following proposals:

1. Joint action of the Communist International and the Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions to arouse in all countries a powerful current of public opinion in favor of aid of all kinds to the regular government of Madrid.

2. Joint action on the democratic governments to lift the embargo and the blockade of which the defenders of the Spanish Republic are the victims.

3. Joint action of the international labor organizations to prevent the manufacture and transportation of arms and munitions to the aggressors and instigators of civil war in Spain.

4. Joint action for the shipment of food, clothing, and medical goods to the Spanish republican fighters.

5. Joint action to come to the aid of the women and children of the militiamen at the front and the victims of the civil war.

The proposals for such joint action were rejected. At the time the British Labor Party and the Socialist Premier of France, Leon Blum, were still adhering to the non-intervention agreement.

In a public statement, Marcel Cachin and Maurice Thorez deeply deplored the action of the Socialist International, saying:

"The Socialist and Communist workers and all democrats like us will consider this new refusal in today's tragic circumstances of great harm to the Spanish Republic and to the labor movement in all countries."

The Communist Party of France strove by every means to break Blum away from his staunch adherence to the non-intervention farce. On October 9, Florimond Bonte, member of the Socialist Party of France, and Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies, wrote to Yvon Delbos, Minister of Foreign Affairs, agreeing with the Communist parliamentary fraction that the non-intervention policy must be changed.

In response, Delbos tightened his cooperation with Britain. Blum refused to budge.

"Blockade Portugal!"

On October 23, the Soviet government flatly declared that it did not consider itself bound by the non-intervention agreement. If the pact could not immediately be enforced to stop all arms shipments to the Spanish rebels, the Soviet Union warned that it would not be obligated to comply with any of the provisions of the non-intervention scheme.

In a note handed to the London Committee by Ambassador Ivan Maisky, the Soviet government declared:

"Having accepted the agreement on non-interference, the government of the Soviet Union expected this agreement would be fulfilled by all participants, and that in consequence the length of the civil war in Spain, as well as the number of its victims, would be reduced.

"It has been shown, however, that this agreement is being systematically violated by several participants. The insurgents are being supplied with arms with impunity.

"One of the participants in the agreement, Portugal, has been converted into a main base of supply for the rebels, while the legal

government of Spain has been boycotted and deprived of the chance to purchase arms outside Spain for the defense of the population.

"Thus, in consequence of violations, the rebels enjoy a privileged position. As the result of this abnormal situation, the civil war in Spain has been prolonged and the number of its victims has increased.

"An attempt by the U.S.S.R. to end the violations was not supported in the [non-intervention] committee.

"The last suggestion the U.S.S.R. made was for control of Portuguese ports, the chief base of supplies for the rebels, but that was not even included in the agenda of today's session.

"Not desiring to continue in the position of people involuntarily stimulating this unfair situation, the U.S.S.R. sees only one issue:

"To return to the government of Spain its right and chances to purchase arms outside of Spain, which right and chances are enjoyed by all governments of the world, and that parties to the agreement be granted the right to sell and offer arms to Spain as they choose.

"The Soviet government does not desire any longer to hold itself responsible for the present position, which is obviously unfair to the legal Spanish government and population, and hereby is compelled to declare that pursuant to its declaration of October 7, it cannot consider itself bound by the non-intervention agreement to any greater extent than the remaining participants in this agreement."

On October 26, the Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of Spain sent an urgent appeal to the Labor and Socialist International urging it to follow the example of the Soviet Union and fight against the non-intervention farce as the quickest means of insuring arms to the legitimate Spanish government.

The Tory government, sensing the rapid about-face on non-intervention in the officialdom of the labor movement following hard upon the Soviet Union's actions and the great wave of support it aroused among all anti-fascists, took steps to try to discredit the U.S.S.R.

First, on October 24, the British cabinet did a little of its own accusing of the Soviet Union, charging it with violating

the non-intervention pact by sending arms to the lawful government of Spain. To fit in with its pose of utter "impartiality", the Soviet Union was accused of "three violations", and Italy "of one violation".

Second, on October 28, under the direction of Lord Plymouth, the non-intervention committee completely absolved the fascist powers of the Soviet charge and the evidence publicly submitted. The London action was even too much for the London correspondent of the Republican *New York Herald Tribune,* who on October 28 cabled his paper as follows:

"A thick coat of whitewash was applied to both Italy and Portugal, acquitting them of the charge that they were supplying arms and munitions to the Spanish rebels."

That was too much for the British Labor movement and the Socialist International.

Important Changes

On the day of the criminal whitewashing of the fascist aid to the Spanish rebels, the British Trade Union Congress and Labor Party leaders met in joint session on the eve of the opening of Parliament. They voted to reverse completely the position taken at the Edinburgh conference just three weeks previously when the Soviet Union began its attack on the non-intervention farce.

The Labor resolutions taking its inspiration from the white hot resentment against fascist aid to the Spanish rebels whipped up by the Soviet Union's action, declared:

"In view of the fact that the non-intervention agreement has proved ineffective in its operation, this joint conference calls upon the British government, acting in collaboration with the French government, immediately to take the initiative in promoting an international agreement which will com-

pletely restore to democratic Spain full commercial rights, including the purchase of munitions, and thus enable the Spanish people to bring their heroic struggle for liberty and democracy to a victorious conclusion."

Note the similar wording of the Soviet notes and the British Labor Party and Trade Union resolution. But the latter came three weeks after the Soviet Union acted—three of the most fateful weeks for Spanish democracy, three weeks wasted.

During the most critical days of the fascist assault against Madrid, when the Spanish masses were in the greatest need of international assistance, the Socialist International failed to act. It continued to stick by the non-intervention agreement until the Soviet Union acted.

It was only *after* the U.S.S.R. had carried on its bitter struggle against fascist violation of the non-intervention agreement, when the Soviet Union demanded a blockade be put around Portugal by Britain and France and when it withstood the combined attack of all the reactionaries of the world that the Second International finally budged.

The action of the British Labor Party and the Socialist International, and later of the National Council of the Socialist Party of France, moving to change the non-intervention policy they have previously tenaciously adhered to came only *after* the Soviet Union began its assault on the non-intervention scandal.

But while passing this extremely important resolution, the joint session rejected a proposal that British labor act independently to prevent arms shipments to the Spanish fascists.

At the same time, Sir Walter Citrine, representing the British Trade Union Council and the Labor Party, urged the Labor and Socialist International to take a similar stand.

It was only then, after the Soviet Union acted, at a

joint meeting of the executive bodies of the Labor and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions that a resolution was passed demanding Great Britain and France take the initiative in restoring to Spain her legal right to obtain arms.

On the momentum of the action taken by the U.S.S.R. in the non-intervention committee, the Socialist International adopted the following important resolution, dated October 26:

"The two bureaus of the International Federation of Trade Unions and the Labor and Socialist International confirm at their joint conference their former declarations that the regular and legal government of Spain must receive the means needed for its defense, in accordance with the permanent statutes of international law.

"In view of the fact that the so-called non-intervention pact, owing to the determination of the fascist powers to aid the rebels, and owing to the impossibility of exercising an actual and effectual control, has failed to bring about the desired results on an international scale, the committees of the I.F.T.U. and the L.S.I. declare that it is the joint duty of the politically and economically organized working classes of all countries to insure, by means of their simultaneous action influencing public opinion and their governments, that a joint international agreement, concluded on the initiative of the French and English governments, will restore complete trading liberty to republican Spain, whose defense must stand in the foreground of the tasks set the world proletariat; and call upon all labor and trade union organizations to coordinate their special activities for the purpose of preventing as far as possible the furnishing of supplies to the Spanish rebels."

For it had become clear to all those who were not anxious to supply the Spanish fascists with arms that what *The New York Times* correspondent, Frank L. Kluckhohn, who had spent nearly three months daily observing arms going to the fascists, reported was true:

"The backbone of General Franco's army is now Italian, German and Moorish." (*The New York Times*, Oct. 30.)

During the bitterest days of the fighting for Madrid, the question was repeatedly asked: Is the Soviet Union shipping arms to Spain?

Again and again, the fascists in Spain, Germany, Italy and Portugal charged the Soviet Union with arms shipments. It was under these pretexts that they themselves dispatched more and more arms to the reactionary rebels.

The Soviet Union never denied it sent thousands of tons of food, clothing and medical supplies. It denied that arms were sent.

After the Soviet Union's dramatic and effective action in London, the world press reported that the Spanish government received new shipments of arms from many sources, undoubtedly facilitated by the Soviet Union's exposure of the action of the fascist powers and its encouragement of sources capable of supplying arms.

Without international support on the part of the working class and anti-fascists, the Soviet Union could not at the outset, with Blum supporting non-intervention, and the British Labor leaders trailing behind the Tory cabinet on the same issue, undertake to attempt to outbid the fascists in the shipments of arms to Spain. The Soviet Union strove almost alone at first to end the non-intervention farce as the quickest way of supplying the greatest amount of arms to Spain.

The position of the Soviet Union was perfectly grasped and enthusiastically greeted in Spain by every anti-fascist group.

Within the Socialist Party of France strong disagreement arose over Blum's perserverance in upholding the non-intervention pact after the Soviet Union had exposed its real effects. Prominent French Socialists resigned their positions in the party. The Left wing within the Socialist Party agitated for an end to the farce. On November 8, a National

Council meeting was held. The main issue discussed was non-intervention in Spain. General Franco's hordes were then furiously hammering at the gates of Madrid. Murmurs grew louder within the Socialist Party's ranks against Blum's intransigent refusal to break away from his original costly position. At the Council meeting Blum passionately defended his stand. From the few portions of this speech, kept secret for the most part, that were published it was evident that Blum declared it would be impossible to change France's non-intervention stand without the approval of Britain.

The Socialist Premier stressed as his basic argument the danger of a German fascist attack on France in the event Spain was given its legal right to purchase arms for defense. Blum further added that in such an event the British government had asserted it would refuse to come to France's assistance, unless the non-intervention pact was adhered to. However, Blum promised he would again approach the Tory cabinet and propose cooperation in rescinding the non-intervention scheme.

"To many observers here," cabled John Elliott, *New York Herald Tribune* Paris correspondent, to his paper, "the promise seemed to be an example of the French premier's cleverness in ironing out his political differences. Apparently offering his critics a great deal, he in reality offered them nothing at all. For no one is more aware than Blum that the British will not abandon the non-intervention pact."

Nevertheless, the National Council, after a bitter discussion, did pass a resolution reading:

"With regard to the events in Spain, the National Council, placing entire confidence in Premier Blum, requests that the French government endeavor to reach an agreement with Great Britain giving effect to the resolution adopted by the Socialist International."

The resolution of the Socialist International we have already quoted in full above.

It will be remembered that the resolution referred to by the National Council was passed only after the action of the Soviet Union; but the Council did not propose passing the buck as Blum so ardently wished.

Spain's Gratitude

We have never heard of a more overwhelming response nor a more profound appreciation of international assistance as that accorded to the Soviet Union by the Spanish people when Joseph Stalin issued his famous telegram, and when the Soviet Union opened its attack on the non-intervention camouflage.

The Spanish Foreign Minister, Alvarez del Vayo, on September 26, while in Geneva, expressed his attitude towards the Soviet Union as follows:

"We lack words to express fully our sense of indebtedness. The Spanish children will always remember the assistance being accorded to them as the result of this noble act of solidarity by the people of the U.S.S.R.

"When our children grow up and begin to take part in the great cause of social upbuilding, they will never forget that in the most difficult moment of their childhood, help came to them from the peoples of the Soviet Union.

"This will also be engraved for all time in the memory of the women of Spain, who, fighting with indescribable courage for the cause of the Republic, were naturally concerned about the fate of their children until they heard of the assistance rendered by the Soviet Union."

From the Anarcho-Syndicalist press, the *C.N.T.*, to the liberal and Left-Republican *El Sol, El Heraldo,* and *El Liberal,* there was a unanimity of the warmest reception and joyous approval of the Soviet Union's action in behalf of Spain.

"Spain's liberation from the yoke of the fascist reactionaries is the cause of all humanity!" is the headline that the

Anarcho-Syndicalists blazoned across the first page of their newspaper *C.N.T.* when they published Comrade Stalin's telegram.

Below we quote from the moving editorials of three petty-bourgeois liberal and Left-Republican newspapers, hailing not only the Soviet Union and Joseph Stalin, but the Communist Party of the Soviet Union:

El Liberal: "This is the first voice raised beyond the boundaries of our country in defense of the Spanish liberties which are threatened by fascism. . . . Mighty Britain and France, the birthplace of revolution, remain behind."

El Sol: "The timorous democrats who upon crawling into safe shelter did not even dare to defend their own interests must either continue to hide beneath their blankets or heed the mighty voice of Stalin.

"A firm hand tore off the legal mask behind which the actors of the tragic non-intervention farce took cover. An end has come to the farce which covered us with blood while the international cowards pretended not to hear our appeals. Free Spain, the defender of social justice and democracy, will never forget the conduct of the peoples of the Soviet Union, which is a friend of Spain forever."

Ahora: "Something common is now being created: a unanimous gratitude of the Spanish people for one country and one party—the U.S.S.R. and the Communist Party. From this hour we are all of us for the Soviet Union and for the Communist Party, absolutely all those who are worthy of the name of Spaniards. . . .

"All of us—liberals, Republicans, Syndicalists, Anarchists and Marxists—might have perished and the world's conscience would not have experienced any pangs. But the firm voice of 170,000,000 people has proclaimed to the whole world the truth about the crime plotted against the Spanish people."

In an appeal dated October 14 addressed to the American youth, particularly to the Young People's Socialist League and the Young Communist League, the United Socialist Youth of Spain, whose members are among the shock-troop fighters against fascism, urged:

"The Russian people, who passed through similar experiences, is daily giving us splendid proof, both in international diplomacy and in solidarity action, that its heart, its will and its work are unconditionally on our side.

"Follow the example of the Russian people! Everybody to the defense of the Spanish youth. Differences must not be an obstacle to effective aid."

What the United States Socialist Party Did

To Spanish Socialists a perusal of the American *Socialist Call,* official organ of the Socialist Party in this country, during this critical period, would make terrible and miserable reading.

Most of the commenting or editorializing on Spain was done by Norman Thomas, in a by-the-way style as an appendage to his general presidential electioneering.

Such crude distortions of the international issues as Thomas and the *Socialist Call* committed can hardly be matched anywhere.

On September 19, in the *Socialist Call,* we find Thomas writing without any distinction between the policy of the Soviet Union and of the Socialist Blum in France.

"What I cannot understand", says the bewildered Norman Thomas, "as I have told certain questioners whom I have come across in my meetings, is why they [the Communists] demand of Blum what Stalin has not done."

But when the Soviet Union attacked the neutrality or non-intervention pact that Blum had brought into life for the benefit of the London Tory cabinet, we did not find Norman Thomas raising his voice in support of the Soviet Union's action. Up to October 31, at least, Thomas did not even seem to be aware of what was happening around the non-intervention issue.

The Soviet Union's first note, one that jarred the fascist supporters of General Franco as well as the British cabinet

and the Socialist Premier Blum of France, was dated October 7. The October 10 issue of the *Socialist Call* maintains a suspiciously discrete silence about it. In fact, not a single word is said about the struggle against non-intervention.

To make up for such emphatic silence, the *Socialist Call* of October 17 in an out-of-the-way corner published a brief item, ostensibly "news" from Madrid, concerning the Soviet Union's action in London.

The skimpy piece is headed: "Arms Embargo on Loyalists Challenged."

The challenger is not Blum, of course, the initiator of the scheme, but the Soviet Union.

The *Socialist Call* recognized that the Soviet Union acted promptly after the lawful government of Spain moved. The "news" item from Madrid said:

"Following the well-documented charges made last week by the Socialist Foreign Minister Alvarez del Vayo at Geneva that fascist Germany and Italy are feeding the rebels with munitions, Soviet Russia has threatened to withdraw from the non-intervention agreement."

The great story about the action of the Edinburgh Labor Party conference, the Socialist International, the appeal of the Socialist Party of Spain to Socialists all over the world to support the Soviet Union's steps against the non-intervention crime, is, of course, not to be found in the *Socialist Call.*

The *Call* admits that Blum hesitates on non-intervention. (Actually he did precious little hesitating in upholding non-intervention.) Search the *Call* during this period with a microscope and you will not find the briefest appeal for support to the Soviet Union's great efforts that literally shook the British Labor Party, the Socialist and Trade Union Internationals out of their neutral policy.

Not a word can you find in the *Call* for united action in

behalf of the united fighting of Socialists, Communists, Syndicalists, Anarchists, and Left Republicans in Spain.

More than three weeks after the Soviet Union acted and the whole situation had changed in the world labor movement, non-intervention is gingerly mentioned in the *Call* and then as something that annoyingly turns up to disturb the routine of Norman Thomas and the *Call.*

This time again Thomas handles the matter single-handedly. He refers chiefly to a circular Western Union telegram that he sent on August 31 to all the presidential candidates. Norman Thomas seemed to believe that this was a tremendously effective deed in behalf of Spain: calling on, for example, Alfred M. Landon, Hearst's candidate, and William Lemke, the fascist Coughlin's candidate, to unite with all other presidential candidates to help Spain, in what the *Socialist Call* declared was her great battle to establish workers' rule and socialism.

Callously, and without the slightest regard for the facts of the situation, Norman Thomas wrote:

"France and Russia and Great Britain might at the beginning have ended the menace of Spanish fascism and worked for peace by compelling the pro-fascist nations to keep hands off or by supporting a duly recognized government with the means to meet a military attack."

One reads in amazement Norman Thomas' bracketing of the Soviet Union, France and Britain equally as forces which would act to stop the Spanish fascists.

As we have pointed out, and as is attested to by such Socialist writers as Robert Dell, H. N. Brailsford and scores of others, Britain, to be on the right side of General Franco, swung Blum into the farce of non-intervention; and it was exclusively the Soviet Union that exposed this scandal and fought against it.

Such facts are either unknown to or are obliterated by

Norman Thomas in his eagerness to put the Socialist Blum on an equal plane with the Soviet Union.

Just as Thomas placed all the presidential candidates on an equal level when it came to appealing for help for Spain, so he dumps England, France and the Soviet Union on one heap in relation to the great struggle against war and fascism.

At the same time, Thomas and the *Socialist Call* completely shy away from the Soviet Union's struggle to end non-intervention.

Though spouting phrases more to the Left than the Jewish (Socialist) *Daily Forward,* Norman Thomas and the *Socialist Call* can hardly be distinguished from the *Forward* when it comes to action in behalf of Spain.

In neither case was there any effort as Socialists to break down Blum's adherence to the non-intervention agreement.

In neither case was there an appeal to the Socialist International or the British Labor Party to change their ruinous courses. Only the Soviet Union achieved that change.

In neither case was there an appeal for a united front of Socialists and Communists, or a response to the Communist Party's appeal for such unity, in behalf of Socialists and Communists who are unitedly giving their lives in the battle against fascism in Spain.

While the *Socialist Call* did not openly attack the Soviet Union, certain people carrying Socialist Party cards and claiming Norman Thomas as their leader indulged in a slanderous whispering campaign against the Soviet Union. Their mask was Socialist membership, but the foul anti-Soviet breath emanating from behind their disguise revealed the hideous Soviet-hating Trotskyite countenance.

Browder's Appeal

A nation-wide appeal for help to Spanish democracy over a national radio hook-up on the Red Network of the National Broadcasting Company was made by Earl Browder, Secretary of the Communist Party, and at that time candidate for president on the Communist ticket. Earl Browder, while speaking to millions of American people generally, in that broadcast on October 23, 1936, directed the following specific appeal for united action to the Socialist Party:

"I appeal to the working class leaders and parties in the United States, to the trade unions, to progressives everywhere, to join us in united action to help save Spanish democracy. I appeal to the Socialist Party, as well as to the Right-wing Socialist leaders in New York, Connecticut and elsewhere, to work out an independent program of action against the Spanish fascists."

An examination of the Socialist Party's and the *Socialist Call*'s record in the first three months of the bitter Spanish civil war must certainly leave many Socialist Party members with a sense of uncomfortable shame for their party's failure to arouse action in behalf of their Spanish brothers.

Repetition of poisonous anti-Soviet phrases, however approved by Trotskyites, will not provide the Spanish workers with a single bullet, with a single bite of food, with a single international force so sorely needed by them.

Whatever differences there may have been and are about the course of the Spanish revolution the Socialist Party had, and now has, no excuse for so miserably failing to help Spain and to unite with others to win millions of American trade unionists and anti-fascists to rush to Spain's aid in the direst days of her history.

What Must Be Done

At every stage of its development and advance the Soviet Union has been met with the hysterical slanders and attacks of all the enemies of human progress.

Its great road to socialism has always been piled high with

the filth and abuse. But these never proved obstacles in its rapid strides forward.

Every great move of the U.S.S.R. to preserve world peace and to hamper the war aggressors has been greeted with howling rage from the fascists and warmongers, with appropriate echoes from the Trotskyite camp.

Is there any wonder now, in this gravest hour of Spain's struggle for freedom and world peace, and the Soviet Union's heroic efforts to give her every aid possible, that the highest campaign of abuse and slander, that the loudest war threats, should confront her?

But always, even though some of the hesitant could not at the time fully grasp the significance of the Soviet Union's action in the face of complicated and deliberately engendered confusing factors, the Soviet Union has, at each forward step, won greater love for its deed, the profound respect of the world's toilers and oppressed.

The great champion of world peace, democracy, freedom of mankind from oppression and exploitation, and the guarantor of the future victory of socialism for all humanity, the Soviet Union, will confound its accusers and its enemies in this greatest of battles for Spanish freedom and world peace.

The Soviet Union is the undenied leader of the hosts fighting everywhere for Spanish democracy and freedom.

The Soviet Union inspires united action of all world labor and anti-fascists against the Spanish rebel butchers and their fascist instigators.

The Soviet Union leads the way.

It must get the loyal support of all who know it is humanity's greatest bulwark against war and fascism.

Under the mammoth blows of the Soviet Union against the fascist criminals aiding the Spanish insurgents, the British Labor Party and the Socialist International and Inter-

national Federation of Trade Unions made an about-face in policy. But the shame of it is that it was greatly delayed.

To achieve the maximum benefits from its great help to Spain, the Soviet Union must have the backing of the toiling masses and anti-fascists of the whole world.

The greater the support behind the Soviet Union in such countries as Britain, France, and the United States against the non-intervention scandal and for Spain's right to obtain all the arms she needs to defeat fascism, the quicker will the objective be obtained.

The most teriffic pressure against the fascists was exerted by the U.S.S.R.

World labor unity has not yet been achieved.

That is the next inevitable step.

It was not achieved for Ethiopia.

Shall Spain go under without it?

Socialist workers, all anti-fascists must answer.

The glorious record of the Soviet Union is the most inspiring in all history in the struggle for the freedom of the exploited and oppressed against their exploiters and oppressors.

It is surpassing itself in Spain.

We must throw all our energy and support behind the Soviet Union and Spanish democracy.

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